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gives strength and vigor to the scene. A pair of bluejays against this dark background look like spots of blue dropped down from above.

I cannot stay any longer, as an inward gnawing makes me conscious that the physical man is asserting himself, asking for his share of the feast, and as the spiritual has had his fill, it is but just that the physical should have his.

The sun now is imprinting his farewell kiss on the distant mountain, and I bid farewell to the scene, to the day, feeling grateful to the giver of all good things.

WILLIAM WENDT.



NEW YORK LETTER.

WATER COLORS

BY

WINSLOW HOMER

OF LIFE AND SCENES IN THE
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC (CANADA)

That is the statement on the small four-page catalogue: a statement that cannot but mean much to anyone who has known Mr. Homer's work. He has been for long one of our strongest painters, and ranking with Inness and Church in his Americanism. By "strong" I do not mean merely as a painter and draftsman — nowadays they are all referred to as strong men — he is all of that, but more. His things show the big, big-hearted man; they are painted, in whatever the medium, with a confident fearlessness and an almost brutal strength. I used always to think of the author of the Homer pictures as a giant, or as a man with at least hands boisterously big and having no patience with petty details. Going into the small Knoedler gallery with this idea of the man, one is not at all disappointed, but surprised, feeling that he never knew how big and how fearless and how masterly.

The pictures cover two walls of the room and deal principally with fishing in Lake St. John and the near-by rapids. Here are caught ouananiche, a fish closely related to the trout and land-locked salmon of our own northern waters and long supposed to be found only in this lake. The pictures might all have been made between catches while upon a fishing trip, and, taken altogether, form a most interesting account. While each picture is complete in itself, it is as a collection they should be seen; I sincerely hope that the unbroken set may find a permanent place in some sportsmen's clubhouse. They must please fishermen, as accurate — they convinced me. Having enjoyed them myself until after six o'clock, I went off with an appetite to a fish dinner, vowing I'd bring my fishing friend to see them. Surely it were cruelty to let him miss them — and he might be able to explain some of their technical excel-

lencies to me. He could and did. He has bored me with his fish talk before now; upon that afternoon the heroic dose of it was most enjoyable. He had fished and shot rapids all around the place, knew it well, and how he did explain things to me! And what trouble I had keeping his voice down! He seemed bent on talking in his out-door, fishing-wilderness tones. Now I know all about it.

That is certainly a great point in favor of the pictures; they interest not only the painter and student, but the more exacting fisherman, stickler as he is for all the little things that make a fishing picture right. The skies appeal to one instantly; they are skies big with near-by hurrying gray clouds — they are fishing skies. Some of the pictures surprise one upon a close examination — there is no trace of the detail and finish so apparent at a little distance. See this one, "End of the Portage," of two men carrying a birch-bark canoe through the woods with sunny foliage — by the way, did you ever try to draw a birch canoe? — a stunning thing of fine freedom. Across the foreground lies a twisted pine-tree trunk, weather-beaten white, and with the characteristic enveloping cracks. The shadows fall blue upon it in a fine outdoor way, and the old wood seems minutely and lovingly painted. No — it is all accomplished most economically; there is little or nothing to analyze. Mr. Homer is just the man to unwittingly send the young student astray — it all looks so easy and accidental, and the Y. S. is sure he can "wash" much neater than that. The "Entering the First Rapid" shows this ease in manipulation; it is early and foggy, and against a gray sky comes the ragged outline of a grayer bluff.

My fishing friend has found another fisherman who is perhaps a more appreciative listener. We'll talk water colors. They are before the "Trout Fishing," a little boat under a big hill at quiet sundown. The water is like a mirror — it is dark under the hill, and the wake from the boat is a thin sharp streak. He says the biggest fish are under there and come out only at this hour. And he is going to tell that favorite trout story!

Let us look at what I consider the best one — "Guides Shooting Rapids." The canoe is poised on the brink just above where the glassy water goes over like a flash. A late afternoon sky; the water is tremendously well done. It is a dramatic moment — one catches his breath — the men hold their paddles in air; in another instant they are to be shot forward. There is one, "Ouananiche Fishing," that is original in composition; the fish, hooked, is in the air very near to us, and the men in the canoe are away back of it. We find the same lack of detailed work on the fish and the same surprising effect of it; my friend says it is a male fish — the nose is enough by which to determine that.



MAGDALENE, BY JOSEPH R. DE CAMP.

Painting copyrighted by
Joseph R. De Camp.

From a Copley print
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One might call attention to every picture here, each one has some distinct excellence, and all are refreshing in their frank honesty and loyalty to this country of clear, pine-scented air and blue skies reflected in swift water. The spirited ones showing the men fishing on the rocks in the rushing blue water, the rocks cutting it like a knife and making sharp white strips of foam ; the "Sunset—Lake St. John," where the resplen-

dent canoe reflects in the gray water, and is followed by a wake of most intense blue; the "Lake Shore," with its gray rocks surmounted by gnarled trees, beyond which is a wet, stormy sky, particularly fine in go. The "Fishing — Upper Saguenay," is good, but only a fisherman could understand what all that line in the air means. There's another, "Under the Falls — Grand Discharge," showing only the foot of the falls and the rapids below, in which he has dared to put the foam and spray against black, which reflects in the foreground water in a way better and more than photographic. Most difficult of tasks! Is there a rule for working out reflections in running, swirling water? And "The Return Up the River," where the guide is carrying the canoe to a point above a small rapid. It is delightful in color and general outdoor effect, and most daring in composition; the three or four big lines in the picture run almost parallel from corner to corner — there seems to have been no effort to break this monotony. The other ninety-nine men would have accomplished it by hook or crook, even obliging the half-breed guide to make his "carry" in a way unprecedented. Here is the man who is not afraid; who paints, caring nothing for what we say of his results, but true to himself, his art, and the thing before him.

With the water colors are hung two large oils — one an Indian fishing girl posed against a stormy sky and fine stretch of water in strong light, and the other, "At the Foot of the Lighthouse — Morning," shows, not the lighthouse, but flying wild ducks and others, dead, which have in the night flown against the big glass. The latter is attractive in color, originally composed, and a wholly pleasing work. The fisher-girl I can't understand. One shoe is in evidence, but whether it contains her left or right foot, and how it can by any possibility contain either, I don't know. I can't connect it with her at all.

* * * *

The other evening when I climbed up to my fishing friend's studio, there was a card on the door reading "Out of town until 20th of May." The Homers have done their work — he has gone off where his mail can't be forwarded to him. And there'll soon be a new crop of fishing yarns.

NEW YORK.

ORSON LOWELL.